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**Tamara M. Green, *The Greek & Latin Roots of English. Third Edition.*
Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003. Pp. xvi, 240. ISBN
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One of my mentors used to teach an etymology course he derided as "Words for Nerds," a vocabulary-building class whose focus was Greek and Latin derivations, and little else. Times have changed. Contemporary etymology courses, while cognizant of the value and appeal of vocabulary building, also use Greek and Latin roots as a window into the ancient world. Such courses, which usually have strong socio-cultural emphases, not only are attractive in themselves, but can draw students into other classics courses as well. Tamara M. Green's *Greek & Latin Roots of English*, now in its third edition, is perfect for this sort of enterprise. Students will find their vocabularies enriched and their horizons expanded, for Green (hereafter G.) touches upon every major aspect of Greek and Roman life. The current edition is an excellent introduction to Greek and Latin, and their many legacies.

The third edition follows and improves upon the second edition.¹ Chapters 1-7 are the more technical, introducing both the study of etymology and those elements of Latin and Greek most important to the English language, while 8-18 are the more cultural, revealing the debt of Western society and disciplines (and their terminology) to Greece and Rome. Chapter 1, "A Polyglot Stew (or 'Food for Thought')," is an essay on the linguistic heritage behind the names of many common foods. The chapter, although brief (nearly three pages), is canny in several ways: it uses an appealing topic to illustrate the concept of derivations and borrowings; it demonstrates proper etymological citations (including the sigla "<" and ">" as well as the often mysterious "cf."); and it emphasizes that the roots of English are multicultural, as not only Greek and Latin, but also Russian, Turkish, Arabic, Chinese, and even the Native American Narragansett dialect find a place at G.'s table. I dwell on Chapter 1 because it is essentially the book writ small: a deft synthesis of the technical and the cultural, with attention to the pedagogical. Students will come away from it with whetted appetites.²

After an overview of language families and the evolution of English (Chapter 2, which benefits from an extended narrative on the history of English, new to the third edition), G. settles in for several chapters of what seasoned instructors will recognize as the etymological equivalent of boot camp. This is not to imply that the chapters are drudgery. Nevertheless, their material is as dry as it is necessary: for example, stems of Latin nouns, adjectives, and verbs; noun- and adjective-forming suffixes; the Greek alphabet and its transliteration;

prepositions and prefixes. In general, G. presents these and other topics in an orderly fashion, and reinforces them with fill-in exercises at the end of each chapter. The goal is to enable students to analyze English words, and to trace them back to their Greek and Latin origins, as well as to build current English words from the same elements. Although I find G.'s coverage of this material ample, I have some concerns about its distribution. Chapter 3 ("How Latin Works") is a virtual crash-course in Latin, covering the rudiments of not only nouns and adjectives, but also verbs: declensions, cases, conjugations, principal parts, and deponents. All of this seems to me too much for one chapter, especially after two considerably less intensive chapters. Moreover, Chapter 5 ("How Greek Works"), although it corresponds with Chapter 3 in title, is a rather different animal. Whereas that chapter teaches students how to isolate the stem of any given Latin word, chapter 5 covers mainly the Greek alphabet and transliteration. On the one hand, G. is right to favor Latin over Greek, since the latter contributes less to English. On the other hand, I doubt whether a student who knows what to do with *do-dare-datum* (p. 25) could do much with *δίδωμι* (p. 49), even though it is a cognate. Instructors should allot more time for these chapters, especially 3-6, than for any others.

Students who have soldiered on through the technical chapters are rewarded with 8-18, in which G. trades grammar for Greek and Roman ideas and the English words they have inspired. The principles of prefixes, roots, and suffixes are put into practice in a broad survey of numbers (Chapter 8); government and politics (9); psychology (10); social science (11); biology and medicine (12 and 13); science and mathematics (14); education (15); the classical influence (16, a wide-ranging chapter including fine arts, city planning, theater, music, and athletics); myth, religion, and philosophy (17); and Latin phrases in English (18). G.'s method in these chapters is to discuss a particular study or discipline (e.g., biochemistry, p. 154), showcasing or suggesting essential terminology; appended to her discussion are the Greek or Latin words from which the terminology derives (e.g., *λύσις*, *ζύμη*, *fermentum*). G. also finds occasion to discuss relevant Greek or Roman practices or beliefs behind certain English words, particularly when the literal meaning of a root has become obscured in current usage. Sometimes these discussions take the form of short notes, such as the explanation of "hysteria" attached to the section on the reproductive system (p. 138). At other times G. offers small essays on certain topics: Roman politics, ancient psychological theory, Greco-Roman economics, astronomy, and libraries are but a few of the topics receiving this extended treatment, the epitome of which is the chapter on myth and religion (17). Like earlier chapters, 8-18 close with written exercises that emphasize the analysis of English words.

G.'s book has always had many virtues: a light-hearted and inviting style, a rigorous attention to etymological detail, and a multi-disciplinary view of the classical world. These virtues remain in the third edition, and are in many cases magnified -- particularly the last, thanks to new notes and essays on Greece and Rome that adorn every chapter. G. has also begun to expand her focus beyond the ancient Mediterranean: a section on Islamic science (p. 155), although brief, is an important addition. The third edition also has the virtue of attractive packaging, with thoughtful epigraphs preceding each chapter, and new photographs throughout.³ As in previous editions, there are useful Latin and Greek indices at back. G. dedicates the third edition to her students at Hunter College, which is both appropriate and telling: one infers that the book has grown over the years in response to the queries and

suggestions of many pupils. Indeed, the book's voice is that of an experienced pedagogue, whose interest in learning is genuine and pronounced. Students with prior experience of classical antiquity will be engaged, while those with little or no contact may very well be fascinated by the world that etymology reveals.

Some quibbling. In the transition to its new publisher, the third edition has suffered growing pains, mainly in the form of typographical errors. Some examples (by no means a comprehensive list): the genitive case ending of the fourth declension needs a macron when first introduced (p. 21); a space is needed between the italicized *i* and the word "as" (p. 25, top); "duplicitous" (p. 80, no. 55) should be italicized; the entry "*populus, populi*" (p. 83) should be indented and preceded by "cf." lest students think it a Greek word; "Dionysis" should be "Dionysus" (p. 182). Moreover, although blanks are provided in the written exercises, they are sometimes too short for the requisite answers, or the vertical spaces between them too small; the experience of filling them in may be rather crabbed for all but those with microscopic script. Finally, some of the exercises in the new section C of chapter 83 (p. 92) seem misplaced: numbers 63-66 are better suited to part A. On the whole, however, the book has re-emerged relatively unscathed and will serve well for many years.⁴

Notes:

1. Ardsley House Publishers, Inc., which became a subsidiary of Rowman and Littlefield in 1998, published the first and second editions (1990 and 1994, respectively).
2. One quibble with chapter 1: Not all of the italicized words in G.'s essay receive etymological citations: "ketchup," "mustard," "pickle," "orange," and "banana" ought to have their own entries.
3. A minor, yet welcome, renovation in the third edition is the use of computer-generated Greek diacriticals instead of hand-written ones. Gone, too, are the rather puzzling checkboxes after each subsection.
4. An Instructor's Manual, containing answers to all written exercises, as well as two quizzes apiece (with answers) for all but Chapters 1 and 2, is available from the publisher upon request.

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